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A SERMON OF REPENTANCE.

A Very godly and profitable Sermon, preached at *Lee* in ESSEX.

By *Arthur Den*, Minister of Gods Word.

Published at the request of sundry godly and well-disposed persons.

JONAH 2.8. *They that wait upon lying vanities, forsake their own mercies.*

LONDON,
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In Concionem *Arthuri Dent*,
G. Pudei Carmen.

MAture reſipiſce, precor, peccataq; linque:
Qui legis, aut audis, quiſquis es, iſtud opus.
Si nova peccatis, peccata prioribus addes,
Olim hæc te contra Concio teſtis erit.
Hâc aliqui lectâ flentes ſua crimina multum.
Mutârunt mores, & nova vita placet.

The ſame in Engliſh.

THou that doſt reade or hear this work,
I wiſh thee to do this:
Repent in time, and ſin forſake,
Amend what is amiſſe.
But if thou wilt adde ſin to ſin,
Not minding to amend,
This Sermon ſhall a witneſſe be,
Againſt thee in the end:
Some that have heard this read of late,
Lamenting much their ſin,
Have chang'd their former manners, and
A new life now begin.

To the Reader.

ALthough I was moſt unwilling that this poor Talent and travell of mine ſhould ever have been broached abroad, and come to light, both becauſe it may ſeem as a Candle lighted at Noon-day; as alſo, Becauſe many other mens doing might more worthily, a great deal, have been publiſhed and committed unto Letters: yet becauſe divers which heard it preached with a lively voyce, were very inſtant, yea, and more than importunate with me to have it publiſhed, uſing ſuch reaſons as I could not greatly gainſay; I did at laſt yeeld to their requeſts: and ſo this untimely fruit is come abroad to be ſold in open Markets. Let no man therefore be offended, that I have not ſtrained my ſelf to flie an high pitch, to foam out the froth of mans wiſedom, and to make a great ſhew of Learning, by blowing the Bladder of vanity, till it burſt with ſwelling; but it is not my uſe; I ſeek eſpecially the ſalvation of the ſimple and ignorant: and therefore ſtoop down to their reach and capacity. Therefore I beſeech thee, gentle Reader, accept my good meaning: reade this without prejudice; like it as thou profiteſt, ſo ſhall thou have praiſe of God, and comfort in thy Conſcience.

A SERMON OF REPENTANCE.

LUK. 13. 5. I tell you nay, but except you repent, you shall all likewise perish.

THe occasion of these words of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, was, because there were certain that shewed him the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their own sacrifices, that is, murthered them as they were sacrificing, and so their blood was mingled with the blood of the beasts which were sacrificed. These men therfore, thought that those Galileans were greater sinners than all other Galileans, because they had suffered such things: And that those Eighteen also, upon whom the Tower of Siloam fell, and slew them, were sinners above all the men that dwelt in Jerusalem. Wherein they did utter a secret corruption, naturally engendered in all men; that is, very sharply to see into the sins of others, severely to censure of them, but in the mean while to

flatter themselves, and to be blindefold in seeing their own sinnes. For these men thought because the like Judgements did not fall upon them, therefore they were well enough, they were not so great sinners, but rather highly in the favour of God, according as many do falsely suppose, that they are alwayes the worst sort of people, whom God doth most strike and presse with his punishing hand: having forgotten that God doth not keep an ordinary rate here below, to punish every man as he is worst, or to favour or cocker him as he is best; but onely taketh some examples, as he thinketh good, for the instruction and advertisements of all other; and to be, as it were Looking-glasses, wherein every man may see his own face, yea, and his own cause handled: and that God is a severe revenger of sinne: that all men may learn, by the example of some, to tremble and beware, lest peradventure they be worthily constrained to keep their own turns, and to know what they have deserved. These men which brought these newes to our Saviour Christ, had taken forth this lesson whereupon our Saviour is justly occasioned to correct their erroneous and sinister judgement, and to teach them, that they must not rejoyce at the just punishment of others, but rather be instructed thereby to repent.

And further, to signifie that God doth not alwayes most punish the most notorious offenders; as murtherers, theeves, robbers, whoremongers, blasphemers, quarrellers, scoffers, and such like, but reserveth them unto the Judgement of the great day, and as it were, kæpeth them against the day of slaughter; and therefore he answereth them negatively, and saith, No, or not so, but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. As if he should say, are ye all of this opinion indeed, that onely monstrous sinners are punished in this World, and others let alone? Or that the Galileans, and those Eighteen upon whom the Tower of Siloam fell, were greater sinners than all others? Or do you think, because the same judgements have not light upon you, therefore you shall steal away in the dark, and escape the Judgements of God? No, no, you are deceived; for I say unto you, That except you mourn and lament for your sinnes, and fall to some agreement with God in time, you (I say even you, which are so ready to condemn others, and justifie your selves) shall not onely perish with the like Judgements in this present World, but be everlastingly condemned in the World to come. So that our Saviour, in so saying, doth thunder down a most dreadfull sentence upon all our heads: For he concludeth, and setteth down,

That

That all men living upon the face of the earth, whether they be high or low, rich or poor, young or old, noble or unnoble, learned or unlearned, simple or politick, of what state, degree, and condition soever they be; living and dying without Repentance, shall perish and be damned in hell fire for ever. The Scriptures are full of such Thunder bolts, Joh. 3. 18. He that believes not, is damned already. And, 2 Cor. 13. 5. Prove your selves, whether you are in the faith: examine your selves: know you not your selves, that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates? Where the Apostle flatly setteth down, That all those which have not Christ dwelling in their hearts by faith, which is the household-sister of Repentance, are no better than reprobates, cast-aways, and condemned persons. But because the most people in these dayes are grossely deceived in Repentance, both concerning what it is, what it meaneth, what it worketh, what be the qualities and conditions of it, which be the causes, and which be the lets and hinderances: and also why when, and wherefore we should repent: therefore I have present intent to teach, First, What is Repentance: Secondly, Which be her qualities and effects: Thirdly, When we should repent: Fourthly, Wherefore we should repent: and last of all, What letteth us from repentance. Which order and me-

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thod of teaching, although some may mislike (as indeed with me it is not ordinary) yet considering the matter I have in hand, I think it not inconvenient. But to the matter.

Repentance is an inward sorrowing, and continuall mourning of the heart and conscience for sinne, joyned with faith, and both inward and outward amendment. Inward (I say) in changing the thoughts and affections of the heart, and outward in changing the words and works from evill to good. This repentance, no doubt, was in David, who, when he was covertly reproved by the Prophet Nathan, and his sinnes laid before his eyes, did not stubbornly defend them, and so justle against God; nor yet secretly excuse them, and daub them over, but cryeth out in the bitternesse of heart, I have sinned, and thereupon made the 51 Psalme; a Psalme indeed, full of dolour and heavinesse: wherein the Prophet bewaileth his faults, lamenteth his sins, and prayeth even for a new Heart, and a new Spirit, new Thoughts, new Affections; new promises of amendment of life: so that in David we may see an inward sorrowing, a lasting grief, (as the Book of Psalmes doth every where declare, which layeth him out, as it were, in an Anatomy) yea, and great reformation, both in inward and outward sinnes. Here therefore behold what is Repentance.

Like-

Likewise St. Peter through infirmity, having denyed his Lord and Master Christ, and being pinched of his own conscience, and wakened with the alarm of a poor Cocks crowing, went out of the Court of Pilate, with a heavy heart, weeping bitterly, and ever after stoutly professing Christ, even unto the death. See then what is Repentance. The Prophets, in the old Testament, exhorting the rebellious Jews unto Repentance, use commonly an Hebrew Verb, which signifies, Turn ye, or repent ye, and come back again: by the which Metaphor is meant, That like as a man, that is strayed farre out of his way, must return quite back again to the contrary way: So those that have strayed from the way of godlinesse to the way of sinne, must come back again, as fast as ever they went forward, and altogether change the course of their life: so that Repentance is an earnest turning unto God, with all your heart soul, and minde. Saint John Baptist, and the Apostles in the new Testament, exhorting unto Repentance, use the Greek word, which signifieth a changing of the minde afterward, or after-wit: So that those which through their folly, and want of former wit, have slipped into the deep pit and dangerous gulf of sinne, when they come unto themselves, and have recovered their wits

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will be wise afterward, and take heed they never come there again, according to the Proverb; The burnt Childe will take heed of the Fire. By this time, I hope you see what is Repentance: It is not every sorrow, but sorrow for sinne; not for some sinne, but for all sinne: not for an hour, but for ever: not for a day, but continually: not for a week, but as long as we live. Some think every sorrow is Repentance, but so should Worldlings repent. Some think every little pang for sinne, is Repentance, so should Pharaoh repent. Some think all weeping and lamenting for sinne is Repentance, so should Esau, Judas, and Cain repent. Some think every little humbling of our selves is Repentance, but so should Ahab repent. Some think that good workes, and good purposes are Repentance, but so should every sick man repent. Some think that a reformation of words and deeds are Repentance, but so should evill men repent. Some think that to cry God mercy is Repentance, and so should every fool repent. You see therefore how many are deceived in Repentance. But if you will see what it is indeed, look back to that which hath been said before: for he that will repent in good earnest, must not hang down his head like a Bull-rush, for a day onely, and so have done; nor cry from the teeth outward,

Lord

Lord have mercy upon me, and so away; but he must make a back reckoning, with diligent consideration of his former life, as did the Prophet David, Psal. 119. 59. I have considered my wayes, and turned my feet unto thy Testimonies. So must every one that meaneth to repent, slink aside into some corner or out-place, that there he may have room enough to beat his own Conscience, and to make his Heart smart for his sinnes, by aggravation thereof, and weighing all the circumstances; as in the ninth of Daniel: The Church of God confesseth her sinnes, not lightly, but with wonderfull great exaggeration, and heaping up one thing to another. So that it is not enough to say, I have sinned; but to say, I have most trayterously sinned, I have most obstinately, carelesly, and rebellously sinned: I have monstrously offended in such a place, in such a house, in such a company, on such a day, in such a corner; in the dark I committed Adultery closely, when I thought none had seen me; in such a chamber I defiled my neighbours wife, mine own conscience doth accuse me of it: in such and such a company I have been drunk, I have spoken and railed against Gods Word, I have mocked the Preachers. I have spared no oathes nor filthy speech: and now (O Lord) Lord, what an ugly monster

and wretched villain am I? Here stand I before thy presence, all naked, blinde, wounded, poor, wretches, and miserable, having deserved a thousand damnations, if thou wouldest enter into Judgement, and try the Law with me. Therefore I beseech thee to shew pity and compassion on me: Annoynt my wounds with the oyl of mercy; restore me my sight; clothe my nakednesse; enrich me that am poor; strengthen me that am weak; help me that am fallen; O bid me not farewell. The infant ouercometh his mother with crying, the childe his Father with weeping, and the servant his master by entreaty; and wilt not thou be entreated, O Lord? Thus, I say, if every man would speak in his Conscience to God, and thus narrowly, or more narrowly examine himself, undoubtedly he were in the way of Repentance.

But alas, it is a world to see how the blinde Buzzards, and croked Canker-worms of this world go alwey from this Rule, deceiving themselves with the bare Title, and naked name of Repentance. Many (indeed) can talke of it, but few walke in it: many speak of it, but few feele it: many describe it, but few know it. It is hid and locked up from the World, and revealed onely unto Gods Children. Many thinke they have caught it,

when they have but the shadow of it. It is so high, that few can reach it; It is so deep, that few can come to the bottome of it: It is so narrow, that few can enter into it; So wide, that few can comprehend it; So slippery, that few can hold it; So secret, that few can finde it: Therefore my dear brethren, I beseech you, let us pray unto our God, that he would reveal unto us this Mystery, which is hid from the World, that we may see it, and know it, finde it, and feel it, to our endlesse comfort, through Jesus Christ; which grace be grant us.

But now to the second point, concerning the qualities and fruits of Repentance. One especiall quality of Repentance is alwayes to bring with it Remission of sinnes: For where true Repentance goeth before, there Remission of sinnes must necessarily follow after; Not that Repentance deserveth Remission of sinnes, but because where God worketh Repentance, there he pardoneth sinnes, because of his promise, as in Ezech. 18. 17. When the wicked turneth away from his wickednesse that he hath committed, and doth that which is lawfull and right, he shall save his soul alive. And again, Isaiah 55. 7. Let the wicked forsake his wayes, and the unrighteous his own imaginations, and turn unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him. So here we see to

whom forgiveneſſe of ſinnes, and the mercy of God belongeth; namely, to the penitent ſinners, to thoſe that leave ſinne, and embrace godlineſſe; to thoſe that forſake their own wayes and imaginations, and turn unto the Lord. And as for ſuch as walk in their own wayes, and follow the delights of ſin, without any ſorrow or purpoſe to leave them, they have nothing to do with the mercy of God: and though Jeſus Chriſt had ſuffered a Thouſand deaths (which could not be) yet ſhall no impenitent ſinner have remiſſion of his ſinnes by his death, nor any other benefit of his paſſion; for they belong onely to his Church, and choſen people here upon earth. **He therefore that is not of the Church; he that is not grafted into Chriſt by faith; he that is not a member of his myſticall Body, can enjoy nothing by** Chriſts death: If any man abide not in me, he is caſt forth as a branch, and withereth, and men gather them, and caſt them into the fire, and they burn, Joh. 15. 16. **We reade in the** 29 of Deut. **how God barreth all ſtubborn ſinners from his mercy, and doth moſt terribly ſhoot out againſt them.** He that heareth the words of this curſe, and bleſſeth himſelf in his heart, ſaying, I ſhall have peace, although I walk according to the ſtubbornneſſe of mine own heart, thus adding drunkenneſſe to thirſt: the Lord will not be mercifull unto him; but when the wrath of

the Lord, and his jealousie shall smoke against that man, and every curse that is written in this Book, shall light upon him. So that God saith plainly, he hath no mercy for such as walk in vain delights of sin, and in the stubbornesse of their own hearts, adding drunkennesse to thirst, that is, joyning one horrible sin to another: yet for all that it is a wonder to see how the blinde worms of the world deceive themselves. For they think, whatsoever they say, whatsoever they do, be it good, be it evill, whether they repent, or not repent, yet they shall be saved by Christs death: as though they would make it a bawd to their sinnes, and so work that villany against Christ: I hope to be saved by Christs death, as well as the best of them all, say some. But where is thy Repentance, thou miserable wretch? Dost thou think that Gods mercy is common to all? and Christs death a bawd for thy sinnes? No, no, when it cometh to the upshot, thou shalt hop short. For it will prove far otherwise: For thou shalt finde Gods mercy turned into justice; and Christs death into Worm-wood, because thou hatest knowledge, and chosedst not the fear of the Lord. Thus you see, my dear Brethren, that Repentance must needs go before forgivenesse of sinne, and where it leadeth not the way, there the Gates of Gods mercy are shut up: and this is the first

quality of Repentance. It hath alſo another condition, and that is, to alter and change men from that they were before, not in ſubſtance and proportion of the body, but in the qualities and conditions of the minde. For whoſoever hath truely repented, you ſhall by and by ſee a moſt marvellous and wonderfull change in him, ſo that he will not do as he hath done, nor ſpeak as he hath ſpoken, nor compauy as he hath companied, nor play the good fellow (as they tearm it) as he was wont to do, nor runne the ſame exceſſe of ryot, as he was wont. **And this is that amazeth the World, and cauſeth them to hiſſle and ſome at the mouth like wilde Boares, and to ſpeak evill of them that turn unto God: For the world loveth his own, and cannot abide that God ſhould pluck one feather from his wings: but Repentance doth violently pull men out of the clawes of Sathan, and change them from the condition of the World: For it maketh of proud, humble; of hurtfull, harmleſſe; of cruell, meek; of wolves, lambs; of Lions, Sheep; of adulterers, chaſte livers; of drunkards, ſober men; of ſwearers, reverent ſpeakers; of haters, friends; of deſpiſers, embracers; of ſcoffers, lovers; of earthly, heavenly; of devills, Saints:** all theſe worketh Repentance. Paul travelled toward Damaſcus a Wolf, a Perſecutor, a Blood ſucker, a Ha-

ter, a Despiser, but ere he came there, he was quite changed, and clean of another minde: so mighty was he that met him in the way. When Jesus Christ sent down the Holy Ghost upon his Disciples, according to his promise, there were some scoffers at Jerusalem which mocked, and said, They are full of new Wine: But the same man cryeth out by and by after; Men and Brethren what shall we do to be saved?

Here was a most wonderfull and sudden change: See then the force of repentance when God striketh it into the heart of a man, and driveth the nail to the head (as they say) it effecteth that which all the wisedome and policy of man is not able to bring to passe: and when they have prouled hither and thither, and laid their heads together, and sought all the corners of their wits; yet can they not tell which way to turn their hand, or where to begin to change the heart of a man and to convert him to God. Therefore repentance is stronger then all the whole world, and worketh that which all men with their naturall wits, fine heads, and deep devices cannot compasse: for the conversion of a sinner is a work supernaturall. Here then we have a Glasse to behold our selves in, whether ever we have repented, or no: for if we finde not this change and alteration in us, we have not repented, and so consequently remain un-

der damnation. Therefore let every man look unto himſelf : for mark how much he is changed and altered from his former wicked wayes, ſo much hath he repented. And he that is the ſame man that he was, three, four, eight, nay, thirty yeers ago, ſurely, ſurely, he hath not repented, and therefore abideth in damnation. I marvell then how theſe men, which never felt any change or alteration wrought in them, nay, whoſe Conſcience telleth them that they are not changed, nor know what it meaneth, can have hope of ſalvation ? unleſſe peradventure they believe not this Doctrine, or think it to be falſe. I will ſend over theſe men to ſuch as have been in the like caſe they now are, and yet though they might do well enough for all that, although both blinde in judgement, and corrupt in converſation. I have known and do know men, which before their converſion and inward change, were counted as honeſt men as ever brake bread, and as ſubſtantiall men as any could be, and as true dealers, upright livers, good Houſe-Keepers as any of their Neighbours : yea; and they had the ſame opinion of themſelves too : and yet notwithſtanding when they have felt Repentance working this change and alteration in them, through the power of the Spirit, at the preaching of the Word : and when they have had new hearts

given them to diſcern better, and new eyes to ſee better; as men come out of a damp, have wondered and marvelled at the palpable and groſſe darkneſſe they were in before, and have burſt forth into theſe words, That they would not be in the ſame caſe they were before, no, not for all the Worlds goods: For if they had died in that caſe, they were ſure they ſhould have been damned. But, I pray you, what caſe were they in before? were they not good honeſt men, and well accounted of, and honeſt livers, and well taken whereſoever they came? ſurely they were ſo taken in the world; but now they think farre otherwiſe of themſelves, their eyes being opened, and their judgements enlightened: for now they ſee what they ſaw not before: now they underſtand that God condemneth many whom the world juſtifieth. Me thinketh this example ſhould make civill and worldly men fear and ſuſpect themſelves, and know their own miſery before God. For thoſe men were as good as they before their converſion, and yet afterward confeſſed that they were plunged to the bottome of hell, and drowned in the depth of damnation. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear; and he that hath eyes to ſee, let him ſee: for if men will ſtill ſooth themſelves for all this, that they ſhall be ſaved, without feeling any change, or work of Repentance, it will coſt

them full dear in the end. For Chriſts Words will prove true, That whoſoever repenteth not, ſhall be damned: that is, whoſoever doth not feel in himſelf what is Repentance; and finde in himſelf the qualities thereof, ſhall be condemned: for where Repentance is, there be the qualities of Repentance; and where the qualities be abſent, there is no true Repentance. So that where Chriſt ſaith, *Except ye repent, ye ſhall all periſh*, it is all one as if he had ſaid, except you know the truth of Repentance, except you can prove unto your conſciences the forgiveneſſe of your ſinnes, except ye feel a change and alteration in the bottome of your hearts, for all your former lewd wayes and miſdemeanours, you ſhall ſurely periſh and be damned. **But let us a little further ſearch out the qualities of Repentance. The Apoſtle, in the 7 chap. of the 2 Epiſtle to the Corinthians, ſetteth down ſeven notable qualities and effects of Repentance.**

The firſt of them he nameth Care: For behold (ſaith he) this thing, that you have been godlily ſorry, what care it hath wrought in you? **this is an earneſt ſtudy, and as it were a taking thought to pleaſe God: for where true Repentance hath once wrought, there followeth great care afterward: care (I ſay) to live in the obedience of God; care to keep a good Conſcience; care to reform our houſholds; care to in-**

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ſtruct our wiues, children, and ſeruants in the knowledge of God; care to pray with them morning and euening: and generally, care to perform all duties belonging to God: So that Repentance is not a careleſſe, but a carefull thing. Let no man think therefore, that although they welter in careleſneſſe of the fleſh, and ſléep in ſecurity all the dayes of their life, yet their repentance is good enough: yea, and though they ſpend whole dayes, nights, months, and yéers in vanities, playes and paſtime, in idleneſſe, fond delights, pleaſures and voluptuouſneſſe, in negligence of all duty, forgetfulneſſe of God, and contempt of all good things: yet for all this, they repent for their ſins, and hope to be ſaued as well as any other. But alas, how can theſe things ſtand together, to repent for ſin, and to delight in ſin; to hate ſin, and to loue ſin, to flie from ſin, and to follow after ſin? But theſe men, I perceiue, would fain make S. Paul a lyer: for he ſaith, A man hath never repented, except he be carefull afterwards to pleaſe God. They ſay, they do repent, and haue repented, although they liue neuer ſo wretchedly and careleſſy. But when all licentious & lewd liuers, filthy whoremongers, beaſtly belly-gods, and careleſſe caitiffs come to the Kingdom of God, and are ſaued, then ſhall theſe men come alſo with them, to be ſaued by careleſſe repentance.

The next quality and effect of Repentance is named, Clearing of our selves, that is, discharging of our selves when sinne doth accuse us, and lay things to our charge: for when sin and Satan do terrifie the conscience of the pore penitent sinner, by and by he flieth unto God, and asketh forgivenesse through Jesus Christ, so clearing himself, and making his apology against sinne and Satan: like as a man that is presented into the Court upon suspition of whoredome, or any other notorious crime, must clear himself by witnesse, of that which is laid to his charge: so the conscience which is cited Satan before the Justice and Judgement-seat of God, cleareth it self by Repentance, and asketh forgivenesse through Jesus Christ. So that here we may see a wonderfull fruit of a penitent conscience: it cannot abide the accusation of sinne, it cannot be quiet till it be reconciled unto God, and so have peace with it self. For this is to be noted in a godly man, That when he hath committed any sinne, and his conscience telleth him of it, by and by he feels lead within him, and is all heavy, and cannot sleep quietly, till he have gotten into some corner, where he may mourn and lament to the full, and confesse and lay open himself unto God, and so clear himself through Jesus Christ, his conscience bearing him witnesse that his sin is forgiven. Where-

as contrariwiſe, the ungodly man, when his conſcience accuſeth him of ſinne, he diſpatcheth away all ſuch thoughts, and treadeth them under foot: and by and by calleth for a pair of Cards or Tables, or ſome merry companion, to drive away time, and put out all ſuch thoughts out of his head: and ſo indeed he encreaſeth them more and more, and cauſeth them to wrankle inwardly.

The third quality is called Indignation; that is, a mortall and deadly hatred againſt ſinne, as when a man doth ſhudder and ſhake, and as it were, grinde his teeth at the remembrance of his ſinnes: For this is alwayes in the penitent perſon, To loath and abhorre all ſinne from his heart, both his owne ſinnes, and the ſinnes of others, and to hate it, as the devill himſelf, which is the author of it: and to flie from it, as from the very cut-throat and hang-man of his ſoul, and to know it to be the onely thing that blindeth and hardeneth, that ſeparateth from God, and procureth all plagues and diſeaſes, both of body and ſoul againſt us. **Therefore he ſpitteth at it in defiance, and diſdaineth it, and ſtoppeth his noſe at the ſtink of it, whereſoever he ſmelleth it.**

The fourth thing is Fear, which is a certain awe of God, when a man is afraid to diſpleaſe him: For the penitent perſon feareth alwayes,

wayes, and being privy to his own infirmity and weakneſſe (when God never ſo little withdraweth his grace, and leaveth him alone) worketh his ſalvation with fear and trembling. He will not preſume upon former grace, to commit any ſinne, or flatter himſelf in the mercy of God, and the things that he hath already taſted of God, to yeld to ſome little ſin; thinking he may do that, and be the childe of God well enough, becauſe ſome of Gods children have fallen into greater: but rather he trembleth at the leaſt motion of ſinne, and is afraid of the temptation which Satan trappeth in the way, and is afraid when the temptations of ſinne are upon him, to ſatisfie the hunger of ſinne; but rather he fighteth againſt ſinne, when ſinne fighteth againſt him, and preſenteth the fear of God before his eyes, (as godly Joſeph in the aſſaults of Potiphars wife) to be, as it were, a tower of defenſe, and well ſpring of life, to avoid the ſnares of death.

The firſt thing is Deſire, that is, hungering and thirſting after righteouſneſſe. For the penitent man is raviſhed with a deſire of good things: he deſireth to be every day better than other: he deſireth to leave every day ſome ſinne; he deſireth to pray; he deſireth new knowledge, and new underſtanding of Heavenly things: he deſireth to hear Sermons, and will ſtrain

him

himself to hear them. He desireth the company of the godly, thinking himself in Heaven, when he is amongst them. He desireth the salvation of his very enemies, and prayeth for them. All these, and many other such like desires are in a penitent man.

The sixth quality is Zeal, which consisteth in the earnest embracing of vertue, and hatred of vice: so that the penitent person is zealous of every good thing, zealous of Gods glory in all places, in all companies, and amongst all persons. He cannot abide that Gods honour should be impeached, or his Name blasphemed, or his glory trampled under foot by wicked men: but will open his mouth to reprove the wicked, and stand stoutly in the defense of Gods glory. He is not like the Atheists and dissemblers, which are alwayes as the company, that is, godly amongst the godly, a Protestant amongst Protestants, wicked amongst the wicked, a Papist amongst Papists, a worldling amongst worldlings, and a swearer amongst swearers, a weather cock that turneth with every winde. The penitent man, I say, is not of that stamp: but he is constant and zealous in all good things: he is zealous both against the pleasures and profits of sinne: though he might win a whole world, or pleasure himself never so much by committing sinne against God, yet he will refuse

ſuſe it: for he hath learned from Chriſts mouth that it ſhall not profit a man to win the whole world, and to loſe his own ſoul.

The laſt thing is Revenge, that is, the penitent perſon is ſo offended with the ſinne he hath committed, that he will be revenged of himſelf for it: As for example, if he have offended in gluttony, he will revenge himſelf by faſting two or three dayes after. If he have offended in whoredome, he will be revenged of his luſt by haltering and byding of them ever after. If he have offended in covetous catching and polling of other mens goods, he will be revenged on himſelf by reſtitution, as was godly and penitent Zacheus: and this indeed is a ſpeciall fruit of Repentance, to reform our ſelves in thoſe things wherein we have moſt offended. Now then we ſee (my dear brethren) what lieth in the belly of Repentance, and which be her inwards: ſo that we muſt needs now come to the unlacing and unbowelling of Chriſts words: Except ye repent (ſaith he) ye ſhall all periſh; that is, except ye have this reformed Care, you ſhall all be damned: except ye have this clearing of your ſelves, you ſhall be damned: except you have this Indignation, you ſhall be damned: except you have this Fear, you ſhall be damned: except you have this Deſire, you ſhall all be damned: except you have this Zeal, you

ſhall all be damned: except you have this Revenge, you ſhall all be damned. For our Saviour Chriſt doth not ſpeak of the bare name of Repentance, but of Repentance with her furniture and appurtenances: ſo that whoſoever hath not Repentance, with all her qualities and effects, or at leaſt, ſome meaſure of them, he hath no Repentance indeed, and therefore ſhall be damned: For except ye repent, ye ſhall all periſh. But me thinketh that I hear ſome men ſay, Here is nothing but damnation, damnation: you preach nothing but the Law; let us hear of the Goſpel. My Brethren, I proteſt unto you, that I ſpeak in love, whatſoever I ſpeak; I deſire the ſalvation of you all. If I could win but two of all this Congregation, I would count my ſelf happy, and think that God had greatly bleſſed my labours. And undoubtedly, if I knew any neerer way to bring you to God, than by preaching the Law, to make you know your ſelves. ſurely, ſurely, I would uſe it: Or if I could be perſwaded that the preaching of the Goſpel, and mercy, would do you more good, you ſhould hear of nothing but Goſpel, Goſpel, Mercy, Mercy. But alas, I ſee that every careleſſe and ignorant man preſumeth upon Gods mercy. I ſee that every filthy liver, and notorious blaſphemer abuſeth Gods mercy, in applying it to himſelf without

Repentance, so that they would make Gods mercy a cloke for their sinnes: I see that every man would fain be flattered in sinne, and hear of it no more, but have the Gospel preached, which indeed belongeth not unto them continuing in their stubbornnesse: but onely to the penitent sinner which forsaketh himself, and groneth and panteth under the burthen of his sinne. Therefore when I see you humbled with the conscience of your sinnes, and grone and pant under the burthen of them: when I see your faces blubbered with weeping, and your hearts mollified, and sorrowing with care, then I will comfort you, and cease to preach the Law. But I pray you, will you steal, murder, and commit adultery, and yet hear of mercy? Will you mock, swear, blaspheme, and rail, and yet hear mercy? Would you serve sinne, hate vertue, and follow your own lusts, and yet hear of mercy? Would you have plasters before you have wounds? Would you have Physick before you be sick? Would you be let blood before you have need?

Would you not account him a foolish Physitian, that will minister Physick to a whole man? Would you not think him an unskilfull Chyrurgion, that will apply gentle salve to an old festered sore, and not rather corrosive? Then know you, my Brethren, that because you

are full of groſſe humours, you muſt have ſtrong Purgations, becauſe you are full of old feſtered wounds, you muſt have corraſive ſalves: for that is beſt for you, and the ſpeedieſt way to recover your health: and foraſmuch as you be rough horſes, you muſt have a rough rider; and hard knotty Timber muſt have hard Wedges, and hard ſtrokes with a Beerle. We preach the Law, to drive you to Chriſt: we preach Judgement, to make you to ſeek mercy: we preach damnation, to bring you to ſalvation. But to preach mercy and forgiveneſſe, before men ſee their ſins, or know their miſery by the preaching of the Law, is to preach the Goſpel unprofitably: For he that is ignorant of the Law, knoweth not what miſery is in himſelf, or what mercy is in God.

What father is there, who, if his childe ſhould play the ſtubborn boy, and diſobey him in every thing he commandeth, would ſtroke his head, and ſay he were a good boy, and not rather ſeverely correct him, and whip him with a rod? What Maſter will commend his ſervant for doing what he liſt, and not what he commandeth him? Even ſo we may not diſobey and do evill, and look to be flattered for, and not rather chidden. Let us know then, That though God uſe ſearching, lancing, or corſing, and ſearching of the bones, and other violent remedies: yet in the mean while he procureth our health by

them

them. And let us further understand, that forasmuch as there is no other means to draw us to salvation, but by the cleansing of all our vices, and the same cleansing cannot be done but by violence, when we be warned by the Doctrine of the Law, so as our own consciences accuse us, although we like well to be now and then flattered and smoothed, yet let us seek to be spoken unto earnestly, to have our faults told us, and to be made ashamed of them, & to have our dishonesty discovered, and not desire to be pleased: For it were the next way to make us rot in our own filthinesse, if we should hold it in secret: and it would cost too dear the setting on, if we should be so flattered by men, and in the mean season the heavenly Judge thunder down upon us.

Therefore, when any man cometh to a Sermon, let him first and foremost make his reckoning to be rebuked, as meet is, and let him understand that it is for his profit that he is not soothed. And if he have itching ears, let him lay them away from him, assuring himself else, that he is fore-closed, so shall he never receive the Doctrine to his profit and instruction: and let him be content to have his sores rubbed and bewrayed, that he may be brought to that which is for his well-fare. If any man please a sick body, what shall become of him? Shall he give him drink every minute of an

hour? Shall he give him Wine, whereas he should give him water? Shall he give him Salets? It were the next way to poyson him. To be short, it is certain that a man doth alwayes seek his own death, when he would have men to soth him. But now, which is better, either that he which hath the ordering of a sick man, should yeild to all his desires, or that he should bridle him notwithstanding that he chase and gnash his Teeth, because he may not have his will in his desires? You see therefore how dangerous a thing it is to flatter, and raise up men with the preaching of Mercy, before they have been cast down with the sense of Gods judgement. Cease therefore to open your mouth, to make hue and cry over the Countrey, saying: They preach nothing but the Law, the Law, Damnation, Damnation; unlesse you will take in Christ too, and make him one of the number, and accuse him of want of wisedome, because he preacheth and crieth out, that whosoever repenteth not, shall be condemned. For my part, I preach the Gospel to whom the Gospel belongeth, and the Law to whom the Law belongeth, and judgement to whom judgement appertaineth. And therefore hold your peace, and be content to be ruled by the wisedome of God. But now let us proceed to the third generall point, which is the time when we

shall repent. The holy Ghost in the Scriptures pointeth us to the present time, and exhorteth us to make that the time of our Repentance: Joel 2. 12. Therefore also now the Lord saith, Turn you unto me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning: Likewise in the 3 to the Hebrews: Exhort one another, whilst it is called to day, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulnesse of sinne. And in the same Chapter, To day if ye will hear his voyce, harden not your hearts as in the provocation. So that now, even now, is the time of Repentance.

Now while he calleth, now whilest he speaketh, now whilest he knocketh; let us now therefore hear, let us now therefore obey, let us now therefore redeem this day, this present Wednesday, which have fore-slowed so many dayes, which have so long hardened our hearts, which have set so many good things runne out and spill besides: let us take up this day, and make it the day of our Repentance. Although we could never be moved with any Sermon hitherto, yet let us now be moved once at last. Let us now say, This shall be my day of repentance, I will deferre it no longer, but now will I turn unto my God, and forsake all my former wicked wayes, and mine own imaginations: I will now change the course of my life, and begin

a new again. I will be acquainted with Gods Word, and take counsell there how to do, how to behave my self in every action, I will not onely reform my self, but also my whol houshold, wife, children, and servants, according unto the same. Thus, my dear brethren, I beseech you, purpose in your hearts without any further delay: and be not like to Epicures & slack-graces, which say: Youth will be youthfull, and youth will have a course, and what should we make it so holy, when we are young? Tush, there needs but a sigh an hour before death, let us be merry now, we shall never be younger: we will repent when we are old. As if (poor souls) they had repentance in their sleeves, and at their commandment, and that they could repent when they list. No, no, these fellows shall pay for their presumption: For God will give them over to hardnesse of heart and impenitencie, because they tary so much upon them, and made so long delayes, that in the mean season they might enjoy the profits and pleasures of sin. Therefore (good brethren) let us not put it off from day to day, but let us now seek the Lord whilest he may be found, and call upon him whilest he is nær: let us take time while time is, for time and tide tarrieth for no man: Let us know this to be the time of our visitation. Our Saviour Christ wept over Jerusalem,

because they knew not the time of their visitation. He reproved the Jews, because they could discern the face of the sky, but could not discern the signes of the times. And surely in the end it will turn to our destruction, if we will not know this to be the day of mercy, the time of grace, wherein God stretcheth forth his hand unto us, and wisedome cryeth out in the streets. Therefore now while we have the light, let us walk like children of the light: the night cometh when no man can work. It shall be too late to call for mercy after this life, when the gates of mercy are shut up, and repentance will be too late. Oh dear Christians, let us remember the five foolish Virgins, which because they over slowed the time, had Heaven Gates barred up against them. Let us all remember the fearfull and dolefull example of the rich Glutton, which being in Hell torments, yelled and yelped for the least ease and help that might be, and could not have it. An hundred thousand times therefore better is it for us, to leave our sins now, to mourn for them now, and now to repent, then hereafter (alas) when it shall be too late: better now a great deal to take some paines, to strain our selves to leave our sins, and to make our hearts smart for them, then to be condemned for ever, and to cry in the bottome of Hell: We have wearied our

ſelves in the way of wickedneſſe and deſtruction, and we have gone through dangerous wayes, but we have not known the way of the Lord. What hath pride profited us? Or what profit hath the pompe of Riches brought us? All theſe things are paſſed away like a ſhadow, and as a Poaſt that paſſed by. We have ſet our ſelves againſt the Children of God, we have had them in deriſion, and in a parable of reproach: We fooles thought their life madneſſe, and their end with diſhonour: but loe they are counted amongſt the children of God, and their portion is amongſt the Saints: Therefore let us know the time of our calling, and let us not be worſe then the fowles of the aire: the Turtle, the Crane, and the Swallow, obſerve the time of their coming: the Husband-man taketh his time, the Mariner watcheth his tides: Therefore let us alſo take the time, and run to the Lord whilſt it is called to day: Which grace God grant us. Now let us return to the fourth point, concerning the cauſes which may move us unto repentance. Herein I have obſerved nine ſpeciall things.

Firſt, The great mercy of God leadeth us unto repentance, as Romans 9. The bountifulneſſe of God leadeth us unto repentance, ſaith the Apoſtle: God doth continually follow us with his mercies and benefits, both concerning our

soules and bodies, we have no good thing which we have not received at his hands, we hold all that we have, of him, and to him we are beholding for all: great is his mercy towards our bodies, and every mercy and benefit either toward soul or body, calleth us to Repentance; he giveth us meat, drink, and clothing; these call us to Repentance: he keepeth us at his own cost and charges here below; this calleth us to repentance: the Sunne, the Moon, and the Starres call us unto Repentance: the Birds of the ayr, the fishes of the Sea, and the fruits of the Earth cry out upon us both loud and shrill, Repent, repent: all creatures move us unto Repentance. Our Creation calleth us, our Redemption cryeth, our Sanctification knocketh, and our Election moveth us to Repentance: What could God do more for his Vine-yard that he hath not done? therefore let us repent.

Secondly, The Judgements of God move us unto Repentance; For all the Thunder-bolts, Plagues, and Punishments which God hath thrown down upon us obstinate sinners, from the beginning of the World, are so many warning pieces unto us, to awake us out of the dead sleep of sin, and to prick us to Repentance. As in 1 Cor. 10. When the Apostle had cited divers great Judgements of God against the old Israelites for divers sinnes, he concludeth;

Now

Now all these things came unto them for examples, and were written to admonish us upon whom the ends of the world are come. So that all the Judgements we reade of in the Scriptures, are so many admonitions, and as it were, Cart-ropes to draw us to Repentance. All the Judgements were reade of, do see, and hear of every day, knock with main strokes, beat down-right upon our consciences, to repentance. The ugly monsters, strange births, and fiery Constillations, unknown Comets, sudden deaths, marvellous droughts, unwonted Snows, horrible Inundations, forraign wonders, strange Apparitions, threatning of Heaven above, with flaming and shooting fire, trembling of the earth under our feet, and our houses over our heads, as of late dayes: What are all these, but as it were great Cranes with beams and Cable-ropes to draw us to the Lord by Repentance.

Thirdly, The Word of God helpeth us to Repentance: For as God in the old time sent his Prophets both early and late, to call the rebellious Jews to Repentance, so he sendeth abroad the Preachers and Messengers in these dayes to sound up the Trmpet of his Word, and to ring the sweet Bels of Aaron amongst them, to awake them to Repentance: but alas, how lightly are they regarded? Who heareth

their voyce? But surely this is the last remedy that God hath appointed; and if this will not move us to Repentance, if this will not cure us; then are we altogether uncurable.

Fourthly, the infinite number of sinnes we have committed, ought to be so many spurres in our sides, to prick us to Repentance. It is sufficient (saith Saint Peter) that we have spent the time of our life after the lusts of the Gentiles, walking in wantonnesse of lusts, drunkennesse, gluttony, drinkings, and all abominable Idolatries. Now therefore it is time to repent. Oh that men would look backe to themselves, as they were forty, thirty, twenty, or ten yeers ago! O that they would call to minde their open and secret sinnes and me thinketh it should make their hearts bleed within their bellies to think upon them: Oh that they would consider how much time they have misspent, and how many other things they have neglected, and altogether omitted.

Fifthly, The shortnesse of our life calleth earnestly upon us to repent. The time of our life is sixty yeers and ten, and if they live to eighty yeers, yet is their strength but labour and sorrow, and so it is cut off quickly, and we fly away, saith the Prophet David: We have spent our yeers as a thought; therefore he adds, Teach us to number our dayes, that we may

apply

apply our hearts to wisedome. Our life, for the shortnesse and inconstancy of it, in the Scriptures, is compared to Grasse, to a Vapour, to Smoke, to a Weavers Shuttle, which glideth away swiftly. Even so the dayes of men passe away, no man knoweth how. Man is of a short continuance (saith Job) and full of trouble. Experience teacheth us, that to day a man, to morrow none. Hence away we must all, here is no abiding place for us: how soon we know not. Therefore let us repent.

Sixthly, the small number of those which shall be saved, ought to thrust us forward to repentance. Strive to enter in at the narrow gate: for many (I say unto you) will seek to enter in, and shall not be able, saith Christ, Luke 13.24. And in another place he saith, The gate is straight, and the way narrow, that leadeth unto life, and few there be that finde it. If men would consider of this, it would make them look better about them, and try with themselves, whether they be of that small number or no.

Seventhly, Death threatens us, which is very terrible to the flesh, and the remembrance of it very bitter to a man that is soused and soked in the pleasures of this World. It flattereth no man, it regardeth no person, it weigheth no friendship, it careth not for rewards; it is very grim, ugly, and cruell, and killeth down right,

where

where it hitteth. Therefore let us repent.

Eighthly, The day of Judgement, and second appearing of the Son of man. He will come as a thief in the night, in the which the Heavens shall passe away with a noyse, and the Elements shall melt with heat, and the earth with the works that are therein, shall be burnt up. Seeing therefore that all these things must be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be, in holy conversation and godlinesse? saith Saint Peter 2. 3. The Lord Jesus shall shew himself from Heaven, with his mighty Angels in flaming fire, rendering vengeance unto them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, saith the Apostle, 1 Thessal. 1. I saw (saith John, Rev. 20.) a great white Throne, and one that sate on it, from whose face fled away both the earth and the Heaven, and their place was no more found. And I saw the dead, both great and small, stand before God, and the Books were ppened, and another Book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged of those things which were written in the Books, according to their works; and the Sea gave up her dead which were in her, and death and hell delivered up their dead which were in them; and they were judged every man according to his works.

In these places we see both the suddennesse, the

the fearfulneſſe and glory of Chriſts coming.

For he ſhall not come poor and contemptuouſly, as in the firſt viſitation, but he ſhall come very princely, royally, and triumphantly, to the great terrour of his enemies; when a conſuming fire ſhall go before him, and ten thouſand thouſands of Angels wait upon him: at what time the Kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief Captains, and the mighty men, and every bond-man, and every free-man, ſhall hide themſelves in dens, and among the rocks of mountains, and ſay to the rocks and mountains, Fall on us, and hide us from the preſence of him that ſitteth on the Throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come, and who can ſtand? Revel. 6. therefore let us repent.

The laſt thing is Hell torments, than the which, nothing is more intollerable. Therefore, ſaith Chriſt, Matth. 9. If thine hand cauſe thee to offend, cut it off; it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands, to go into hell, into the fire that never ſhall be quenched; where the worm dieth not, and the fire never goeth out. The Scripture ſpeaketh terribly to our ſenſes, concerning the eſtate of the damned perſons, calling it Hell fire, damnation, the Lake that burneth with fire and Brimſtone for ever. In the thirtieth Chapter of the

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Prophesie of Isaiah, it is called Tophet, and is even prepared of old, it is even prepared for the King, he hath made it deep and large, the burning thereof is fire and much wood, the breath of the Lord like a River of Brimstone, doth kindle it. These speeches are terrible in themselves, and very marvelously amaze us. But if I had the tongues of an hundred men, nay of an hundred Angels, yet were I not able to utter them as some (one day) shall feel them, much lesse were you able to conceive them. If all the tortures and cruell torments that can be devised by the wit of man, were executed upon some one, yet were it nothing to this. We poor wretches think there is no paine to a Cholick, or a cruell Ague; but if all the Cholicks, Agues, and other strange Diseases, could possibly light upon one man, it were but a flea-biting to that which is to come. The paine is endlesse, easelesse, and remedilesse. The dayes of their hellish torments shall never wear out, nor their yeers come to an end, the longer they continue, the lesse hope they have; when as many yeers be expired as there be men in the world, and Starres in the Heavens; when as many thousand yeers are ended, as there be stones and sands by the Sea-shore, yet still there be ten hundred thousand times so many more to come. Those that will not now be moved in hearing,

shall

shall then be crushed in pieces in feeling. All Drunkards, Swearers, Whoremongers, Usurers, Extortioners, Lyars, Mockers, Contemners, Secure Persons, Jolly fellowes, Roysting Ruffians, Lusty bloods, the brave Lads of the World, and all other unbelievers shall one day be apprehended, and arraigned before the Barre of Gods Tribunall Seat, where the Majesty of God shall stand above them with a naked Sword of Vengeance, and a Scepter of Justice; the Devill, that old Satan, shall stand on the one side to accuse them, and their own Consciences on the other side to condemn them, and the gaping gulf of Hell underneath them, ready to swallow them up for evermore. Then shall the dreadfull sentence of eternall woe and damnation proceed against them, Goe ye cursed into Hell fire &c. There they shall drink (as a just recompence of their iniquity) the bitter Cup of Gods eternall Wrath and Indignation in the Kingdom of darknesse, and in the fearfull presence of Satan, and all the cursed enemies of Gods grace; where the dolefull Drum of Gods Anger shall ever sound through their ears, where ever shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth; where shall be confusion, woe, and endlesse lamentation: their gripes shall be so great, their groans so deep, and their garbolles so intolerable, that they

shall

shall grin like a dog in their infernall convulsions, and with howling and yelling cry out, wo and alas, that ever I was born: O that I had never bæn born, or that my Mother had born me a Toad: so, then my condition should have bæn better then it is: cursed was the time I was begot in, the hour I was conceived in, and the day I sucked my Mothers paps: cursed I was alwayes, cursed I am, and cursed I shall be evermore: Woe, woe, how great is my torment? Whose heart doth not melt? Whose ears do not glow? Whose hair doth not stand upon his head to hear these things? Therefore (dear Brethren) let us repent. If the mercy of God cannot allure us, let his Judgements scare us: If his Judgements cannot scare us, let his Word move us: If the Word cannot move us, let our sins amaze us; If our sins cannot amaze us, let the shortnesse of our life damp us; If the shortnesse of our life cannot damp us, let the small number of those that shall be saved affray us; If that cannot affray us, let death terrifie us; If death cannot terrifie us, let the day of Judgement shake us; If that cannot shake us, let hell torments shudder us and rend us in peices. For verily (my brethren) if none of all these can prevail, if we will not for all this repent, but be still obstinate, then we shall all perish, and be damned, according

to Christs words. Now let us proceed to speak of those things which hinder from repentance: which indeed, although they be in number infinite, yet at this time I will lay forth seven speciall lets and hinderances unto repentance.

The first is Unbelief: that is, when men will not believe such things which are spoken and proved unto them out of the Word of God: that is it that vomiteth up all good things, and poysoneth the very intralls of a man, and keepeth all good graces from us, as appeareth, Matth. 13. 38. He did not many great works there for their unbelieses sake: and in the fourth Chapter to the Hebrews, it is said: Unto them was the Gospel preached, as also unto us: but the Word that they heard, profited them not, because it was not mixt with faith in those that heard it. So that heer we may see, although we hear never so much, yet if we bring not faith with us, we shall never profit unto repentance: for unbelief taketh up our hearts for Satan, and refuseth all the wholsome doctrine of salvation, and doth so harden men in the wayes of sin, that in the end they become past feeling, and cannot be touched one whit, either with the judgements or mercy of God, but count the one as blasts of winde, and make the other a covert for their filthinesse. You shall note some men, who when they have heard

their sins straightly ripped up by the Word of God, & their just damnation proved by the same, without speedy & earnest repentance, will break out into these words of unbelief: If this be as he saith, God help us, I hope it is not so: I trust I shall do well enough for all this, as long as I have a good faith in God, and do none no harm: shall I leave my pleasures & my profit for their saying? What? do they think no body shall be saved, but such as read the Scriptures, and hear Sermons? God forbid, but those which do not go to hear Sermons, should be saved as well as they: Why may not one serve God as well at home at his house, having good Books and good Prayers, as by coming to the Church to hear Sermons and Service: Alas these men stand too much in their own light, and bewray what folly and ignorance is in them. For do they think to be saved by any other means then God hath appointed? or when God hath avouched any thing in his Word, will they except against it, and so make God a lyar? when God hath once set down a thing, and proved it to their faces, will they yet reply; when God hath told us, that the preaching of the Word is the ordinary means of our salvation, shall we hope to be saved, though we contemn it, and never (or very seldome) hear it? Is not this plain infidelity and unbelief, that when God saith one thing, we will say no-

ther: when God saith yea, we will say no, I hope not so. Yea surely, that is it that stoppeth the way to Gods graces, and barreth us out from repentance.

The second let is, The presumption of Gods mercy: for if men be sharply reproved for their sin, and exhorted to repentance, by and by they talk covertly, saying, God is mercifull, God is mercifull: as though God were made all of mercy, and that there were no justice in him at all. And thus the wicked make Gods mercy an occasion to sinne. Which thing the Prophet Nahum in the first of his Prophesie doth sharpely reprove: The Lord (saith he) is slow to anger, but he is great in power, and will not surely clear the wicked. But because I have spoken before of this presuming and misapplying of Gods mercy, I will here passe it over, and willing you to note it as one speciall let unto Repentance.

The third hinderance is, The example of the multitude: for that doth harden and imbolden men unto sin; as when many Birds flicker and flock together, they fall upon the baite without any fear; but one or two alone will be afraid: even so the examples of many sinfull companions do imbolden men to run through the snares of Satan, without any mistrust. Therefore it is said in Exod. 23. Thou shalt not follow a multi-

rude to do evill. This is the thing which hindreth a great number from God; for they never look up unto God, or to his Word, but stare upon the common doings of most men, and examples of the world; thinking if they do as the most men do, and as their Fore-fathers have done before them they are cock-sure, and on an even ground. And thereupon ariseth their devilish Proverb; Do as the most men do, and the fewest will speak ill of you. But they have forgotten Saint Pauls Rule, Rom. 12. Fashion not your selfe like unto this World. These fellows that stand upon multitudes, will reason thus; We see none of the great ones of the world, none of the noble, none of the rich, none of the wise and prudent, receive this doctrine but only a few shake-raggs, and beggerly rascalls, and therefore it is a token that it is nothing worth, and that it is doubtfull, and not for us to meddle withall. Loe what thoughts may creep into our heads, and how slyly Satan may trump in our way and blind-fold us, and lead us away in the dark, by doting us with the example of the multitude. Therefore let us take heed of those pit-falls which Satan layeth in our way, and not be carried away with those thoughts and reasons. The wicked bear themselves in hand, that they shall win the game, and that the gole goeth on their side, & there is nothing but crowing long before

it be day, and great triumphing among them before any stroke be given, and that because we are but a handfull of people, and they a great multitude, and that in a manner the whole World agreeth with them to practice our death. Thus the devill doth cast a mist before their eyes, and closely leads them away from Repentance. Therefore dear brethren, let us stand fast in the Word of the Lord and not be carryed away and bowed quite down with the raging streams of the multitude, but let us know it to be an especiall Engine of Sathan, whereby he driveth us from Repentance.

The fourth let unto Repentance is long custome of sinne, for that taketh away all sense and feeling of sin and maketh it, as it were another Nature unto us; so that we may as well alter nature, as shake it off, when it is once thus souldred unto us by long custome. Therefore it is said, Jer. 13. 23. Can the black Moor change his skin, or the Leopard his spots? Then may you also do good, which are accustomed to do evil. There the Prophet affirmeth, that it is as hard to cure an old disease that is bred in the bones, and to remedy a sin that hath been hatched and brought up with us, as to wash a black Moor white, or change the spots of a Leopard, which cannot be, without destroying of Nature. And surely, try it who will, he shall finde it as

hard a matter to leave an old custome, whether it be of swearing, of gaming, of lying, of whoring, of evill company, or of any other sin, as to wash an Æthiopian. Therefore it is written, Prov. 27. Though thou shouldest bray a fool in a Morter, among Wheat brayed with a Pestell, yet will not his foolishnesse depart from him. So that as long as we are in custome with sin, the dore of Repentance is barred against us.

The fifth hinderance is long escaping of punishment, for the wicked thereby are hardened in sinne, and driven off from Repentance: even as an old thief that hath stolne a long time, and escaped both prison and Gallowes, is animated more boldly to proceed in his wickednesse, thinking he shall alwayes so escape: So many filthy and lose livers go forward in their abomination without Repentance, thinking that because God doth not incontinently punish them, and shew some manifold Judgement and sign of his wrath upon them, therefore they shall be acquitted for altogether. Whereas contrariwise, if God should by and by strike them down as soon as they had sinned, by thundering upon one, and lightening upon another, and raining fire and brimstone upon the third it should make them afraid. Hereupon it is said in 2 Pet. 3. 24. This first understanding, That there shall come in the last dayes mockers, which will walk after

their

their lusts, and say: Where is the promise of his coming? For since the Fathers dyed, all things continue alike from the beginning of the Creation. But let these men well know, that when God hath delayed a long time and prolonged the term of the wicked, at length he will shew, that although he waited for their repentance, yet he forgot not their misdeeds, but registred them before him, and packed them up upon a great heap to encrease the terrour of his wrath.

The sixth hinderance is, The beholding of other mans ends: for when some men that have lived a wicked and an ungracious life, and have been notorious sinners even to the Worldward, so that every man could point at them; yet if upon their death bed they can say a few good words, and cry God mercy, and say their prayers, and forgive all the World, and so dye quietly, it is marvellous to hear how foolish people of the world will exalt them, and justifie them, saying, He made a very good end as any man could make, he dyed as quietly as a lamb, and let all things in good order before he dyed. Hereupon another wicked and monstrous varlet is encouraged to sin. For thinketh he, such a man lived as lewdly as I or any man else, and yet he made a very good end, and why may not I do so too? But alas, these mens eyes are bleared; for to dye quietly is not to dye godly: to cry

God mercy for fashion, is not to have God mercifull: to say a few prayers from the teeth outward, is not to die in the faith of Christ: for many do all these, and yet die miserably.

The last let is hope of long life: for while men feed and befot themselves in this hope, they are drunken in sinne, and deferre the day of Repentance, as the rich man in the 12 of Luke, dreaming of his long life, cast off all thought of God, and the other life, and of Christs coming, and of all good things, and said within himself, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many yeers, live at ease, eat, drink, and take thy pastime. Thus the blear-eyed men of this world, choke up Repentance, and quite smother it, by doting themselves with hope of long life. My dear loving friends, let me commend unto you, if you desire to reade a godly and a larger Treatie of Repentance, a book called Davids Repentance, and The great Assize both published by a worthy Minister not far from us, Master Samuel Smith, Minister of Pittlewell: where you shall finde such spirituall comfort, and such godly exhortations to this purpose, to exhort all to forsake sin, and turn to God by Repentance, that I dare say few have equalled him in that kinde. Therefore my dear brethren, I beseech you by the mercies of God, in the bowells of Christ Jesus, that none of all these common lets

may

may ſtay you from ſpeedy and unfeigned repentance, but that you may over-ſlide them all; leſt happily you being found without repentance, and taken tardy in your ſins, ſhould all periſh, and be damned, according to Chriſts ſentence. Wherefore in concluſion, let us with good Ezechias be afraid of Gods threatnings, ſorrow aforehand, ſtand in awe of God, examine our conſciences, mourn for our ſins, and lament inwardly, that when the wicked, who have ſwimmed in pleaſures here below, ſhall enter into their eternall pains, we may then, I ſay, there have eternall peace and reſt: that when Jeſus Chriſt ſhall appear from Heaven with all his Angels, we may have Crowns of glory, and reign with our God, and our Saviour his Son, and all his Saints and Angels, in the midſt of all joy, in the Heavens for evermore. To the which joy he bring us all, which hath ſo dearly bought us, Jeſus Chriſt the righteous,

To whom with the Father, and the holy
Ghoſt, be all honour, glory, praiſe,
power, and dominion, now
and for evermore.

Amen.

FINIS.